

## **Targeted Watersheds Grants**

Office of Water with Regional Participation

**Geographic location or area of activity:** National - There are Targeted Watershed Grants (TWGs) located in each EPA Region.

**Description of activity:** EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grant (TWG) program is a competitive grant program that provides funding to community-driven watershed projects. Since the TWG program began in 2003, EPA has provided over \$54 million to a total of 68 watershed organizations across the United States. In 2006, EPA awarded \$16 million to 22 of the nation's outstanding watershed practitioners. The TWG program provides watershed organizations and practitioners with resources to examine water-related problems in the context of the watershed in which they exist; to develop creative solutions to those problems; and to restore and preserve water resources through strategic planning and coordinated project management that include public and private sector partners. Details on individual projects funded by TWGs are available from the program's website.

TWG projects provide measurable environmental results illustrating that implementation of cooperative conservation can foster greater integration of limited resources, encourage community stewardship roles and improve the environment and human health. An excellent example of this is the Skagit River project. The Skagit River watershed in northwestern Washington plays vital ecological and economic roles. Commercial forestry, hydroelectric dams, agriculture and urban development are central to the watershed and local economy. Since receiving TWG funding, the Nature Conservancy has improved water quality, restored wetlands habitat and developed market-based incentive programs to encourage local farmers to grow wildlife-friendly crops within the Skagit River watershed.

While a few of the watersheds that have benefited from the TWG program are in urban areas, most are in rural and agricultural areas. For example, TWG funding for the Bear River Commission, in the Bear River watershed in Idaho, Utah and Wyoming has supported the development of real-time water quality and stream flow data, a library of documents about the watershed and interactive maps of watershed areas for the river. These tools and many others are available on the watershed's website, <http://www.bearriverinfo.org>, the development of which was also funded through TWG funds.

Another example of an environmental-agricultural partnership fostered through the TWG program is the Tuttle Creek Lake project. Tuttle Creek Lake, a large agricultural watershed that covers 9,628 square miles, is located in Nebraska and Kansas. This project is a collaborative effort to address multi-jurisdictional water quality problems of excessive sediment runoff, nutrients, bacteria and herbicides. It employs market-based incentives (like reverse auctions) to encourage and support landowners to adopt Best Management Practices (BMPs) to address nonpoint source pollution. The Tuttle Creek Lake project has encouraged continuous no-till farming systems and enhanced educational efforts to bring about reductions in sediment and nutrient loading as well as reductions in herbicide and bacteria levels.

**Interagency partners:** Grantee partners include, but are not limited to, state governments, tribal governments, and other federal agencies.

**Local partners:** Grantee partners include, but are not limited to, universities, nonprofits, community groups, and local governments.

**Activity URL:** [www.epa.gov/twg](http://www.epa.gov/twg)